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### **A Healthy Start: Reasons to Vaccinate Your Child**

Immunization gives parents the safe, proven power to protect their children from 14 serious and potentially deadly diseases before they turn 2 years old. To recognize the importance of immunizations for a healthy start and throughout our lives – and to make sure children are protected with all the vaccines they need – the Iroquois County Public Health Department is joining with partners nationwide in recognizing August as National Immunization Awareness Month.

“Children who don’t receive recommended vaccines are at risk of getting the disease or illness, and of having a severe case,” said Vonda Pruitt, Director of Nursing at the health department. “Every dose of every vaccine is important to protect your child and others in the community from infectious diseases.”

Today’s childhood vaccines protect against serious and potentially life-threatening diseases, including polio, measles, whooping cough, and chickenpox. Immunizations can protect others you care about and they also protect future generations by reducing the prevalence of serious diseases. When children are not vaccinated, they are at increased risk and can spread diseases to others in their family and community – including babies who are too young to be fully vaccinated, and people with weakened immune systems due to cancer and other health conditions.

Parents can find out more about the recommended immunization schedule at [www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/parents) or call the Iroquois County Public Health Department at 815-432-2483.